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ABSTRACT

This paper documents a small group discussion about the preparation of teachers for urban students with disabilities. The paper reviews data on the incidence of limited English speaking students in urban areas, changes in the racial composition of urban schools, and the increasing incidence of low-income families. Other issues in urban education include teacher attitudes toward students, the failure to attract and retain teachers in urban schools, and the shortage of minority leadership personnel. The paper calls for education leaders to focus research attention on the problems of urban schools and develop appropriate programs to prepare teachers for city school districts. Possible solutions include such techniques as forming dynamic partnerships among universities, public schools, businesses, parent groups, and social service agencies; implementing policies and procedures that ensure racial and cultural fairness; making bilingual education services readily available; and dividing large schools into small independently functioning units. Obstacles, barriers, and inhibitors to obtaining the ideal are discussed, such as failing to involve special education in school-based management and failing to provide beginning teachers with effective classroom management skills. Strategies for special education preparation programs are also outlined, including cultivating a greater understanding of different cultures and traditions, providing first-hand experience in urban schools, attracting multicultural personnel into the profession, and developing an understanding of human social interaction. (53 references) (JDD)

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Changes in the Urban School Population: Challenges in Meeting the Need for Special Education Leadership and Teacher Preparation Personnel

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Defining the Issue

Schools have changed significantly in the 36 years since Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka (1954). Schools now enroll more Blacks, more linguistic and cultural minorities, and more students with handicapping conditions than ever before. A large proportion of these new groups of students come from low income families. Many of these children and youth enter school with powerful hopes and dreams sustained by their parents' fierce desire to see them succeed. Unfortunately, the education of too many of these students is characterized by low expectations, inferior resources, ill-prepared teachers, a lack of understanding of their life circumstances, and differential treatment. Nowhere is this is so true as in the schools of our large urban centers.

One need go no farther than the nearest city newspaper to learn of the ills that beset city schools today. It is clear that the country is undergoing major demographic shifts as a result of immigration from Southeast Asia, Central and South America, the Soviet Union, and other parts of the world. The arrival of very substantial numbers of students from other cultures, who do not speak English and may have had relatively little schooling prior to their arrival in the United States, stresses the schools which they enter. For example, more than half of the entering kindergarten class in New York City in 1988 spoke a language other than English as their primary language (Lieberman & Callagy, 1990). Students arriving from third world nations, often victims of political oppression and survivors of war, may suffer the consequences of long term malnutrition, lack of schooling, inadequate medical care and psychological problems which derive from their early experiences. While most of these children will succeed (some brilliantly) in their general education classes, some will require special education services.

In the population of native students, there also are major demographic shifts occurring in cities. By the year 2000, over half of the students in our nation's big city public schools will be non-White (Watson, 1989). In New York City, for example, a major shift in the racial composition of the student body has occurred in the past decade. In 1977-78, of the 1.35 million

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students enrolled, White students accounted for 39%; Black students, 32%; Hispanic students, 26%; and other minorities, 3%. In 1989-99, however, Whites numbered only 29%; Blacks, 34%, Hispanics, 30%; and other minorities, 7% (New York Times, 09/22/88). The Chicago Board of Education reports that Whites comprise only 12.9% of the students in that city's public schools, while Blacks comprise 60%; Hispanics, 24%; and other minorities, 3.1% (Chicago Tribune, 1988). These shifts in racial and ethnic composition of the schools should theoretically have no greater impact on special education than they do on general education. However, the educational and psychological literature is replete with empirical evidence indicating that bilingual and minority children are over represented in special education classes (Mercer, 1983; Tucker, 1980; Willig & Greenburg, 1986; Wright & Santa Cruz, 1983).

A more alarming change in student demographic composition has to do with socioeconomic status--the student body tends to come from low-income families. Nearly 70% of poor black youth and 62% of poor Hispanic youth live with someone receiving public assistance (Perales, 1988). In Chicago, for example, 68.1% of public school children come from low income families (Chicago Tribune, 1988). A number of risks which are important predictors of the need for special education are associated with poverty. First, poor mothers tend to be under educated. Second, they tend to be malnourished, putting their children at risk even before birth. The inadequate, and often substandard medical care available during pregnancy, and available to their children during their lifetimes, means that illness, diseases and disorders are more frequent and often go undetected and untreated, thus increasing the likelihood that disabilities will result. For example, while only 5% of White upper-class infants suffer complications at birth, compared to 15% of Whites with low socioeconomic status, 51% of non-white infants suffer some birth complication (Gelfand, Jenson, & Drew, 1988). Children who suffer birth complications are more likely to exhibit neurological problems that later contribute to academic difficulties (Magrab, Sostek, & Powell, 1984). A developmental screening program conducted in Chicago inner city community health clinics found 20% of the infants aged birth to 3 years to display development that appeared to be delayed (Brinker, Frazier, Lancelot & Norman, 1989). Even when delayed development is suspected in children of the urban poor, early intervention services may not be sought due to the more pressing issues of immediate survival (e.g., housing, food, safety) facing these families (Brinker et al., 1989; Laskey, Tyson, Rosenfeld et al.,1987; Palfrey, Singer, Walker et al., 1987). Furthermore, we know that there is a sharp increase in the number of young children who will carry the AIDS virus, or suffer the consequences of their mothers' drug abuse. Recent surveys suggest that one of every 200 infants born in the New York metropolitan area is infected with the AIDS virus (New York Times, 2/2/89). Finally, there is an alarming increase in child abuse and neglect nationally, and apparently especially in cities. Child abuse has been listed as the second leading cause

of traumatic brain damage in children younger than 6 years of age. Poverty increases the risk of family conflict and substance abuse, both of which increase the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. Substance abuse, for example, not only increases the risk for organic disorders in children, but also enhances the probability of inadequate parental interaction (Imber-Black, 1988). There is a growing realization that mothers who use Crack cocaine during pregnancy are likely to give birth to infants who will require intensive rehabilitation during preschool years, and may require special education during their school years.

A less obvious, but perhaps more devastating consequence of low-income, minority and bilingual status results from teacher attitudes towards these students. Numerous studies have highlighted the dramatic impact of teacher expectations on student performance (Rist, 1970; 1973; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). According to these studies, teachers often adjust educational goals, teach different material, and reward or punish behavior differently by class as well as race. Curriculum content, type of instruction, frequency and form of teacher-pupil interaction, and resources, tend to favor children in higher rather than lower socioeconomic groups. For example, Raudenbush (1983) reports that teachers of low-income students tend to minimize discussion and interaction on cognitive issues and instead stress role learning.

Ability grouping, too, appears to place additional risk upon minority, bilingual, and low-income students. "Minority students and those from the lowest socioeconomic groups have been found in disproportionate numbers in classes at the lowest track levels, and children from upper socioeconomic levels have been found to consistently be overrepresented in higher tracks" (Goodlad, 1984, p. 152). Such early differential treatment has a long-term effect on the student's schooling. Students placed in lower tracks will likely remain in the assigned track for the duration of their academic career as they will seldom be provided with the curriculum content necessary to allow them to rejoin their higher-track peers (Raudenbush, 1983). These students are almost three times more likely to be referred for special education and related services, and contribute substantially to the staggering drop-out rate reported for many urban schools.

The student mobility rate in urban schools also contributes to student academic difficulties. The proportion of students entering or leaving any given school in the city of Chicago may be as high as 54 percent (Chicago Tribune, 1988). Learning, teacher and peer relationships, and general academic progress are threatened whenever the continuity of schooling is interrupted (Barresi, 1982). High mobility rates have been associated with ethnic and cultural differences. Economic disadvantage also has been shown to increase the probability of disrupted schooling (Hunter, 1982).

The effect of these demographic shifts on the nation's corps of urban teachers has been devastating. Teacher absenteeism is epidemic in the Chicago schools, for example. On average, Chicago teachers take 11 sick days during the 39 weeks they work each year, about twice as many as the average of teachers across the country (5.7 days). At least 1,070 teachers-4% of the staff-call in sick, and an average of 190 classes go unstaffed, according to Chicago School Board records. The absentee rate is higher on Mondays and Fridays, when an average of 1,117 teachers don't show up, and an average of 259 classes go unstaffed (Chicago Tribune, 1988). Vacancies in teaching positions in urban schools are three times greater than in suburban or rural schools (Boyer, 1988). Furthermore, urban schools are unable to attract and retain young, new teachers. Less than 4% of the students in more than 900 teacher education programs preferred or planned to teach in city schools (Boyer, 1988). Markedly poor school facilities, relatively low salaries in areas that have a high cost of living, the difficulties presented by the student body including the emotional reaction that any compassionate person has when confronted with poor, hungry, neglected, and too often homeless children--all make urban teaching less than a desirable option.

Failure to attract and retain teachers in our urban schools is especially problematic in relation to minority personnel. Only 8% of the teachers in the United States are Black (Watson, 1989). Within the next few years, this number is projected to decline to less than 5% (Cooper, 1988). Minority teachers report that they are more likely to leave the teaching profession (40%) than non-minority teachers (26%), even though they do not differ in their reported level of job satisfaction (Harris, 1988). This survey goes on to report that less experienced minority teachers are the most likely to say they will leave. Fifty-five percent of minority teachers with less than five years of teaching experience say they are likely to leave the profession.

A drastic shortage of minority leadership personnel also is evident. For example, there are 15,438 school districts in the United States. Of these, 350 enroll over 75% of all Black children. Yet only 112 Black superintendents preside over school districts (Cooper, 1988). While specific statistics related to the number of minority and bilingual persons currently enrolled in special education leadership programs is not readily available, statistics for similar programs have been collected. A national survey of school psychology programs reported that only 11.5% of students attending either masters or doctoral programs were from minority groups (Zins & Halsell, 1986). This study goes on to report that only 1.3% of these students were Hispanic. Minority and bilingual teacher educators are also in short supply. Thus, we must develop effective programs to recruit and retain minority teachers and administrators if we hope to provide the multicultural models in the schools necessary to promote cultural and ethnic diversity and equality. One key to this is the preparation of leadership personnel who are

themselves members of minority groups, and who are committed to the problems of urban special education.

Traditional teacher education programs may not be addressing their task in a way which prepares personnel for the harsh realities of the urban setting. Urban schools may not necessarily require of their teachers a different or unique set of skills or competencies from that of their colleagues in suburban or rural school; however, they certainly demand that teachers be cognizant of the particular contextual variables that pertain to the urban setting (Montero-Sieburth, 1989). Additionally teacher practitioners must become more cognizant of the cultural nuances that influence the educational process.

What is currently needed is a group of educational leaders who will focus research attention on the problems or urban schools, and develop appropriate programs to prepare teachers for the nation's city school districts. These leaders must intensify the examination of instructional strategies that meet the challenge of urban schools and schools (e.g., identifying effective instructional grouping schema for diverse categories of students, effective practices of engaging poor and minority families). Only then can we hope to adequately prepare teachers for the instructional and student behavioral issues found in the urban school context.

The nature of the problems experienced by many urban youth frequently transcend disciplinary and professional boundaries in colleges and universities, job titles, and perceived responsibilities in the community. The implementation of quality services for children and adolescents in our urban schools, therefore, requires a coordination across social policy, medical, educational, juvenile justice, and human service disciplines, each with different epistemological bases, different organizational structures, and different economic foundations. The next generation of leaders in urban education, including special education, must have this multidisciplinary perspective.

Alternative Solutions

Any attempt to impact the quality of services provided to exceptional learners in the urban school will, of course, involve the special education system itself, but also must consider shortcomings in the regular education system. Likewise, meaningful changes in our urban schools will require a community-wide systems approach.

Dynamic partnerships between universities, public schools, local businesses, parent groups, and social service agencies in urban communities must be developed to address the needs of the "total" school-aged child. The local public schools must become an integral part of the community. The narrow focus of the schools' role in the community must be challenged. The urban community must begin to respond to the needs of an increasing

number of children and families with serious personal and social problems. The public school represents perhaps the most logical focal point for meeting the needs of children and youth for educational, vocational, and support services. The public school might serve as the site for infant and early childhood intervention programs where not only infant simulation and preschool, but also nutritional, health, and social services can be provided (Brinker et al., 1989). Before-and-after-school programs for elementary-aged children and appropriate after-school activities for adolescents should be seen as critical components of the schools' role instead of "extras" that easily can be cut from school budgets. Schools could house liaison personnel from various social agencies existing in the community (National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1985). Additionally, the schools, in partnership with public and private agencies, and local businesses, could provide meaningful transition and drop-out prevention programs that incorporate significant employment opportunities. The school can not, however, be expected to carry these responsibilities in isolation from, or without its share of the resources of, the community it serves.

Schools must vigorously pursue means to recruit, retain, and promote multi-cultural personnel. Schools will be hard pressed to communicate a sense of cultural pride and equality when the vast majority of their students come from poor, ethnic and language minority families while the teachers are predominantly White middle-class people (Wilson, 1989). Colleges and universities must strengthen programs to recruit minority students, and teacher education programs must prepare candidates to work successfully with diverse populations (Burstein & Cabello, 1988).

The urban school must intensify efforts to provide equal access to quality education at all levels. Policies and procedures which insure racial and cultural fairness in classrooms and schools such as fair grading and evaluations, fair discipline and suspension, and fair involvement in student activities must be intensified (Cole, 1983). Teachers, trained in multi-cultural education/interaction, should hold high expectations (not simply high standards) for both academic achievement and behavior (Rist, 1970). Traditional homogeneous grouping or tracking should be eliminated. Additionally, programs that serve economically disadvantaged (e.g., Chapter 1) and handicapped students must be restored and expanded (Children's Defense Fund, 1984).

Bilingual education services also must be made readily available to the ever increasing number of language minority students. Assessment practices should ensure that bilingual students are not improperly denied, nor provided, special education services. An adequate supply of bilingual teachers, special education teachers, and related services personnel must be provided for the urban schools (Cegelka, Lewis, & Rodriguez,

1987). Staff training of existing teachers to ensure proper implementation of bilingual programs must be accomplished. The curriculum must not only include basic skills, that should be taught and mastered early, but also develop higher level abilities, such as logical, analytical, and critical thinking, problem solving and test-taking skills (Public Education Information Network, 1985). Instructional materials and texts should provide ample coverage of the accomplishments of the various cultural groups represented in the school.

Schools' student enrollment should be of manageable sizes, thus large schools should be divided into small, independently functioning units to permit personalization of students' educational experience (Raywind, Tesconi, & Warren, 1984). Instructional programs should utilize effective teaching practices that emphasize cooperative and interactive learning strategies. Schools should be encouraged to develop regular education options designed to meet the needs of children with diverse learning styles, thus reducing the number of students misplaced in special education. Students must become more active in their educational programs, exerting self-determination and active control in the process. Thus, social skills, empathy for others, and self-control may become integral aspects of all instruction. Evaluation of student ability must include more than standardized tests. Schools should broaden their assessment and evaluation practices by developing systems for teacher observation and record-keeping which relate directly to instruction. Finally, schools must develop procedures to monitor and evaluate their curriculum, pedagogy, and control practices. More time for observing and discussing curriculum and pedagogy with other teachers, supervisors, and experts in the field could be provided. Peer-monitoring would increase the collective responsibility for addressing the practical issues of those teachers and administrators who are incompetent or otherwise unsuited for their responsibilities. School-and/or academic area-wide continuing education programs might be provided to allow teachers to keep current with their field while maximizing the overall impact of the training.

The ideal urban school is one that realistically addresses the individual needs of the students. The quality of the educational experience develops out of the interaction of the students, the teacher, and the curriculum. While there are many excellent urban schools exist (Goodlad, 1983), far too many are characterized by neglected students, ill-prepared teachers, and poorly developed curriculum. School personnel, students, parents, social policy makers, and interested community persons must work together to make each school an integral part of the community it serves and capable of preparing students for active participation in a democratic society. Ideal urban schools would serve all students effectively. At this time, because many urban schools fall far short of this ideal, we must continue to be concerned that some, and perhaps many, children are enrolled in

special education not because they are handicapped, but because our educational institutions have failed them.

Obstacles, Barriers, and Inhibitors to Obtaining the Ideal

Revitalizing the urban public school is a Herculean task. Perhaps the greatest barrier is convincing those concerned that these large school and political bureaucracies can be transformed. Numerous highly publicized commission reports on education have proposed more centralized, bureaucratic control of the schools, student testing, curriculum, and teacher preparation and certification (National Commission on Excellence, 1983). This top-down perspective, with mandates and standards imposed from central governing bodies, too often fails to consider the interrelationships between the problems of the schools and the problems of society.

Other proposed reform measures have centered on school-based management and shared decision making (Guthrie, 1986; Mertens & Yarger, 1988). This bottom-up perspective offers the alluring possibility of reforming schools from within by involving teachers, administrators, parents, and others in the community in the design and management of local schools. Reforms growing out of the National Commission on Excellence (1983) report are primarily reflected in such initiatives as state-wide curriculum revisions, increased graduation requirements, and calls for improving the quality of the teaching force through stricter certification requirements. In many of our cities,the notion of school-based management and shared decision making has fallen on fertile ground. Experiments are underway in Miami, Rochester, and Chicago, while major initiatives are planned in New York and Los Angeles. However, none of the models in these cities involves special education in any systematic way; rather, it is hoped that as schooling improves, fewer children will be referred for special education services. While this may be the case, it is sad that general and special educators have not seized this opportunity to plan jointly for the full integration of special education into the ongoing program of the schools.

Pragmatic solutions to the issues confronting the urban schools most likely will depend upon coalitions of parents, school personnel, educational experts, and community businessmen, working in concert with local school and political officials (Public Education Information Network, 1985). There is no single set of solutions that will serve equity and excellence inall schools and communities. Local problems, laws, practices, and customs vary greatly from one community to another. If we hope to capitalize upon the grassroot potential for change we must examine existing legislative and fiscal barriers to local initiatives.

Some argue that mandates and close monitoring are necessary because most teachers are unqualified to make curriculum and

pedagogical decisions. Over time, however, increased mandates, more top-down controls, and centralized teachers and student testing requires less individual judgment and initiative by teachers. The net effect is to erode morale and depress quality teaching further. The most competent, thoughtful teachers, the very ones whom we must retain to exercise leadership in the schools, are driven from the profession (Public Education Information Network, 1985). Educational excellence and true equity cannot be mandated. Teachers and school personnel will not be coerced into developing the type of environment that promotes student academic and emotional growth (House, 1974; Sarason, 1982). The ideal urban school environment, instead, will emerge as a function of the particular goals and norms chosen, the understandings and expectations created and shared by a group of people (e.g., school personnel, neighborhood and community groups). The personal commitments of participants to these shared norms that define the moral order or climate of the school is paramount. The energy necessary for the needed urban school reform "is primarily located in and very close to schools" (Goodlad, 1983, p. 554).

Teachers because of their continuous contact with students are the critical participants in the definition of moral order and school climate. Without a competent, inspiring, dedicated teaching staff our reform efforts are incomplete. Yet, we face a national crisis in the identification and preparation of competent, qualified teachers willing to teach in the urban school. Minority, bilingual, and special education teachers are in particularly short supply.

As a result of the lack of trained teachers, urban school districts have resorted to the practice of employing ill-prepared or unqualified personnel under emergency certification provisions. In 1987, Chicago Public Schools employed over 4,000 teachers (almost 14% of the teaching staff) that were not properly certified for the positions they held (Chicago Tribune, 1988). A more shocking statistic relates to the average number of classrooms that have no teachers. Failure to identify an adequate supply of substitute teachers in Chicago schools during the 1987-88 school year left an average of 193.2 classrooms each day without a teacher (Chicago Tribune, 1988).

Teachers that graduate from traditional pre-service preparation programs seldom are provided the realistic skills (e.g., classroom management) needed to be successful in the urban classroom or to stem the wave of low-income, minority and bilingual children that inappropriately become labeled as handicapped (Fox, Kuhlman, & Sales, 1988). Most teacher education programs provide rather stagnant "foundation" and "methods" courses in a fragmented fashion that tends to inhibit students from integrating the theory from various courses with practice. State mandates and university "turf wars" contribute to this fragmentation and the failure to revitalize teacher education efforts.

Recent recommendations to reform teacher training and certification efforts have stressed increasing entrance and exit requirements (e.g., grade point average, standardized test scores, competency testing) and the period of study required to achieve certification to teach (e.g., the Holmes Group's (1986) emphasis on fifth-year training). Such efforts attempt to provide some measure of accountability, and to ensure that content-area teachers have adequate background in the subjects they will teach. Little attention has been paid, however, to the impact of such measures on the issue of recruitment of minority students to the teaching profession (Bass de Martinez, 1988; Bell & Morsink, 1986) or to the issue of what constitutes appropriate undergraduate study for those who will teach students with exceptional needs. With regard to the first issue, it can be postulated that individuals who are members of minority groups, including those who are bilingual, would be further impeded in their efforts to enter the teaching profession (Marcoulides & Heck, 1988). With regard to the second issue, it is not clear that there is any single discipline, or combination of disciplines, which, if studied as an undergraduate would lead to increased proficiency in teaching students who are handicapped, or those with exceptional needs. Too little research has been conducted on the characteristics of teachers who are successful with students in cities to be able to predict at this time whether it is academic ability, affective/social ability,, or membership in a minority group which contributes singly or in combination to the capacity to be effective in teaching handicapped students in urban schools.

Efforts at staff development (i.e., inservice, rather than preservice education) do not appear necessarily to achieve their desired outcomes to prepare teachers who are underqualified for their current placements. They "tend...to pull teachers out of the school setting and to offer little substance and depth that might be likely to change existing behavior in significant ways" (Goodlad, 1983, p. 557). Teachers seldom come together to discuss curriculum or instructional techniques. Tye (1981) reports, "teachers tend to be isolated in their own classrooms, in control of what goes on there and satisfied with the situation as it is. They feel impotent to effect school wide decisions, they do not wish to call upon resource people, they individually select their own inservice or post-credential college coursework..." (p. 52). More disheartening is evidence that teachers rarely may utilize instructional skills learned during staff training programs. Lloyd (1973) reports that teachers provided intensive training on instructional techniques seldom displayed these new skills in their classrooms, although they were able to demonstrate the skills when asked to do so. Goodlad (1983, 1984), in his examination of over 1,000 classrooms found very little substantial difference in how teachers taught and what students were expected to learn. Schools appear to be rather impervious to change imposed from the outside, supporting the notion that the best hope for change may reside within the school itself. Teachers and principals hold the key. Support for

this notion may be found in research on peer coaching and peer supervision (Ludlow, Faieta, & Wienke, 1989). It is important to note that these notions underlie the quickly-evolving trend towards school based management and shared decision making (Guthrie, 1986; Mertens & Yarger, 1988). With regard to special education, there is substantial evidence that in schools where there are effective procedures for shared decision making, coupled with a program of pre-referral interventions, the number of "judgmentally handicapped" students decreases (Chalfant, Pysh, & Moultrie, 1979). However, in schools where teachers take individual and collective responsibility for their own performance, they must be provided administrative support. Unfortunately, administrators seldom are taught skills to promote the personal development, self determination, and cooperative management of the teachers in their schools (Crisci & Tutela, 1990).

While forces within the school hold the greatest promise for needed reform, external constraints also impinge upon the urban school. For example, schools today are confronted with an ever expanding social mandate. The charge to the school, however, is not at all clear. Federal, state and local directives frequently are merged with other edicts and may require massive documentation (Goodlad, 1983). Social skill development, sex education, values clarification, citizenship preparation, related services, and vocational assessment and training, are but a few of the expectations frequently placed upon schools in addition to more traditional academic training. Frequently these expectations are to be fulfilled in spite of a lack of fiscal and personnel resources. Even when these resources are available, few school administrators demonstrate the leadership skills needed to coordinate service delivery (Goodlad, 1983). These school personnel, for example, seldom have access to the needed database to determine resource allocation to meet these mandates.

Another factor that inhibits the ability to provide quality education to students in urban schools and to reduce the over-identification of these students for special education services is the inequitable distribution of revenues and resources to urban schools. For instance, New York City Public Schools enroll 39% of all children in New York State,yet the allocation of state funds to the New York City Public Schools amounts to about 30% of the state's education budget. State aid to suburban and rural districts is disproportionately higher than it is to New York City. Despite the obvious need, our society spends far less money educating inner-city children than children in suburban areas. Declining tax bases in our cities and increased competition for available dollars by other municipal needs (e.g., fire protection, welfare, shelter for the homeless, drug treatment and prevention programs, health care costs for those with AIDS and others with catastrophic illness) results in proportionally lower allocations for education. In suburban communities, where these demands are much less pressing,

allocations for education represent twice the proportion of their total budgets to education as do the cities (Cole, 1983).

The problems and the potential solutions of ensuring a quality education for all of our urban children cut across numerous social systems. The contribution of each of these systems must be considered and barriers to their working together effectively must be illuminated. Ultimately, however, the agenda for school reform must be grounded in respect for the nature of the day to day work of teachers in classrooms; it must address what interferes with their ability to successfully teach students (Public Education Information Network, 1985).

Strategies for Moving Towards the Ideal

A large body of literature on the problems that beset urban schools exists although this is not true for special education in particular. Many researchers and policy makers have outlined the need for increased autonomy from centralized governing bodies (House, 1974; Sarason, 1982). That is not to say that these larger systems do not have a role in reforming urban schools, rather that this role is that of enabling the individual schools and communities to implement needed change. Any attempt to outline strategies for change that encompass all of the social systems involved is well beyond the scope of this paper. We will, however, attempt to concentrate on those social systems that most directly effect the preparation of special education classroom teachers, educational leadership, and related services personnel.

The information presented thus far supports the assertion that our urban schools are undergoing significant changes that place students at an increased risk of educational failure. Many students will be referred, and ultimately found eligible for special education services despite the fact that their achievement deficits are not clearly the result of a handicapping condition. Others will be handicapped as a result of factors which often are related to poverty: maternal malnutrition and drug abuse, sexually transmitted diseases,lack of adequate prenatal care, and abuse or lack of adequate nurturance. To counteract the chance that children will be incorrectly identified as eligible for special education we must face squarely such issues as teacher expectancy, ethnic and cultural bias, and ineffective teaching must be faced squarely. To mitigate the incidence of children who are handicapped as a result of drug abuse, malnutrition, and other factors associated with poverty, we must advocate for expanded social welfare programs, better educational programs for parents and children alike, and the careful coordination of special education and other services for handicapped children from infancy through adulthood.

If we are to develop powerful teacher education programs we must first gain (and incorporate into both teacher and leadership

preparation) a fuller understanding of the urban school and the various social/ecological systems with which it interacts. Training programs must cultivate, within educators at all levels, a greater understanding of the cultures and traditions of the people the schools serve. Urban school personnel have become increasingly alienated from the communities and neighborhoods in which they work. Few urban school teachers live within their schools' communities; therefore they lack a clear understanding of the characteristics and problems of the children they serve. Coursework in urban sociology, cultural anthropology, and other related fields might prove useful as a part of teacher preparation, especially if discussions of the educational implications of urban, multicultural, and bilingual issues are included.

First-hand experience in the schools and other social institutions of the urban community provides another powerful source of insight. For many whose own backgrounds are limited to comfortable suburban or middle-class urban living, the depressed urban community is essentially unknown. Systematic observation and direct participation in the schools of the area during preservice programs provide an opportunity (however limited) to learn something of the children, their learning styles, and the schools that serve them. Organized volunteer work in hospitals, community agencies and after-school programs offers another dimension. For example, in many urban hospitals, there are nurseries for "boarder babies", whose mothers have given birth in the hospital, but have not taken the baby home upon their discharge. These babies board at the hospital, awaiting foster care placement, or a decision of the parents to release them for adoption. Volunteering to spend a number of hours each week with these babies, who may reside in the nursery for many months, quickly introduces students and teachers to the problems and issues of dealing with children in the city, while also providing much needed stimulation to the babies. Countless other examples might be cited: the point is that teacher education programs must strive to incorporate such experiences into the curriculum in order to sensitize prospective teachers to the realities of inner-city communities.

Walking tours of the community and conversations with businessmen, social workers, clergymen, politicians, and law enforcement officials could provide additional information related to the complex social environment of the urban setting. Contacts with parents in organized groups, in conferences at school, and in home visits are extremely helpful. Also of value are extended interviews with school guidance workers and other school personnel.

These experiences should be introduced at an early stage in prospective teachers' programs, since they can be helpful to the student in clarifying career goals, and helpful to faculty advisors in identifying those who should be encouraged (or discouraged) from entering the profession. Furthermore,a

realistic understanding of the conditions which influence the teachers's task may spell the difference between the starry-eyed idealist who goes forth to uplift the masses but retires in bitter defeat after the first month of school and the informed professional who has the ability to empower the students with whom she/he interacts.

Related services personnel, too, should become involved in programs that familiarize them with the cultural variation they will likely encounter in the public schools. Psychologist, social workers, speech pathologists, occupational therapists and other seldom possess the cultural awareness needed to provide unbiased assessments (Miller-Jones, 1989). Training programs might benefit greatly if they pooled their resources to develop powerful multi-disciplinary courses to examine cultural issues and their impact upon the student as she/he attempts to interface with the school and its many domains.

In addition to providing opportunities to increase the cultural awareness of special and regular educators, we must intensify our efforts to attract multicultural personnel into the profession. Bass de Martinez (1988), Zapata, (1988) and Middleton, Mason, Stillwell and Parkers (1988) offer valuable insights and suggestions in this regard. Efforts to encourage minority and bilingual students to consider teaching as a career should begin early. Expanding recruitment programs to high schools or even junior high schools has been suggested (Harris, 1988). In some cities, (for instance Houston, New York and Columbus), the public schools have opened alternative magnet high schools for those interested in considering teaching as a career option. New York City's High School for Teaching provides a full academic curriculum, but also provides weekly opportunities for students to serve as teaching assistants, tutors for younger children, and to observe widely in a variety of preschool and school programs. Those of us concerned with recruiting the best students for careers in special education must become involved in such programs. Finally, providing substantial financial incentives for minority students who want to become teachers would undoubtedly prove helpful (Arbeiter, 1987; Bass de Martinez, 1988). Traditional assistantships and fellowship stipends seldom provide the funds necessary to complete advanced training. Persons from lower-economic groups often lack the financial reserves necessary to complete leadership training.

Tye (1987) suggests that many teachers in urban schools are trapped in the "deep structure of schooling": the uniformity of classrooms; the overall control orientation of policy, program, and pedagogy; the general similarity of curriculum and of schedule; the reliance on test scores as measures of success; and the practice of tracking. Confronted with the overwhelming demands of the urban school, these teachers rely upon knowledge and strategies that tend to be irrelevant to the students and that tend not to correspond to the context in which the teaching and learning are taking place (Montero-Sieburth, 1989). Teacher

training programs should critically examine their curriculum and course requirements. The fragmented "foundations" and "methods" approach to teacher training fails to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Often courses that provide the knowledge and skills needed to address the realities of the urban classroom (e.g.,bilingual/bicultural education, classroom management, consultation and counseling) are not available or are simply not suggested by student advisors due to the heavy course requirements of most certification programs.

Teachers and administrators must begin to develop an understanding of human social interaction. Together they must begin to develop a more supportive infrastructure within which school reform becomes feasible. Both groups would benefit from coursework and practical experience in counseling and consultation. Increased time for observing and discussing curriculum, pedagogy and personal interaction in ways that emphasize skilled feedback would allow for improved personnel management systems (e.g., peer supervision, peer-consultation, democratic leadership). Interpersonal skill building and knowledge of various social system functioning might better prepare teachers and administrators in their interactions with the families of their students. An understanding of the student as a member of the family system might better prepare educators to design instructional programs that take advantage of the student's interpersonal and cognitive strengths. The frequent mismatch between the student and the method of instruction might be minimized if we could capitalize on the student's role in the family. For example, even very young children from single parent families may play highly responsible roles in their family, exerting considerable control over their own and others' activities. In school these same children may have little opportunity to exert any control over the nature of the classroom task. In frustration such students may resort to inappropriate behavior as this allow some level of self-determination and control of others.

Model programs in urban education at the preservice, and leadership levels are sorely needed. These programs should attempt to incorporate a multidisciplinary perspective to the issues confronting the urban school. Both regular and special education personnel must be included as prevention and service to exceptional children increasingly involves all educators. Coursework and supervised practicum placements would focus upon the issues of the urban school as discussed above. Additionally, continuing education programs should be developed to address similar needs in the body of existing school personnel. Innovative methods of delivery must be developed that increases the probability of behavior change on the part of participants. For example, courses could be offered at schools for interested teachers. Peer-monitoring of the skills being taught could become an integral part of the course structure. Thus, a critical mass of personnel would be available to support change in the school.

Attempts to better serve the exceptional students of the urban schools requires a broad examination of the real-world issues that impact the student, the teacher, the classroom, the school, and the community. The next generation of teachers and educational leaders must be prepared to address the "whole" child. This requires more than a knowledge of curriculum and pedagogy. These persons must be aware of themselves, and the communities in which they work. Only then can we hope to provide a truly meaningful educational experience for all children.

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